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PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:

KAREL VAN DEN BERG

Serial No.: 09/828,358

Filed: April 9, 2001

For: A FEED METERING DEVICE

Group Art Unit: 3644

Examiner: K.S. Smith

12-31-2002
GROUP 3600

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

To the Commissioner of
Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

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This is an Information Disclosure Statement which lists prior art that may be considered of interest in the examination of subject Application.

This Information Disclosure Statement should not be construed as a representation that an exhaustive search of the prior art has been conducted or that other material information as defined under 37 CFR §1.56(a) may not exist.

It is submitted, however, that this Statement complies with the requirements of 37 CFR §1.56, §1.97 and §1.98 and the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure, Section 609. If, for any reason, the Examiner to whom this Application is assigned for examination considers otherwise, it is respectfully requested that the undersigned be contacted so that any deficiencies can be corrected.

The following documents are submitted herewith:

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1. U.S. Patent No. 5,570,655, to Targa, which was issued November 5, 1996 for a device for controlling animal access to a location. Four magnetic reed switches 16 are secured to the top rim of an animal feeding dish and a collar having magnets thereon is placed around the neck of an animal that is to be discouraged from eating food from the dish. When such animal approaches the dish, at least one of the reed switches 16 is closed which energizes a buzzer or the like to deter the animal from eating food in the dish. An animal not having a magnetic collar or collar with magnets thereon does not cause the buzzer or the like to be energized and therefore is not deterred from eating food from the dish. Instead of a buzzer, a bright blinking strobe light or other type of signal may be used to frighten an animal away from the dish. Also instead of a magnetic field, sensors may be used which are responsive to other fields such as electromagnetic fields, radio and light frequencies. Alternatively, the magnetic reed switches may be placed in the collar of the animal to be discouraged from eating from the dish together with a sound generating device and the magnets can be placed on the dish as such.

2. European Patent Application No. 0 636 312 A1 of van der Lely, published February 1, 1995, discloses a shed in which animals to be milked can move about freely. The shed has a plurality of resting stalls and a compartment wherein the animals are milked. To discourage an animal from entering a resting stall until one or two hours have elapsed after it has been milked, the stalls are provided with a warning member 19 which comprises a flashing light and a member 20 which gives the animal an electric shock. After the one or two hours has elapsed and the animals enter a resting stall they may remain there until it is time for them to be milked again whereupon the flashing light warns them to leave the stall and if they do not do so, they are given increasingly intensive electric shocks until they leave the resting stall.

3. Europäische Patentanmeldung No. 0 610 171 A3, of Vogl, was published August 10, 1994. This document is in German. However, it appears to be directed to a feeding apparatus for swine. As understood, reference numeral 7 appears to be a hopper which, as shown in Figure 1, has an electronically operated valve 8 leading to a conduit 9 which is received in a trough 6 which has two closures 10 and 11 that, it is presumed, can be opened by components 13 and 14. It is surmised that reference 2 indicates the compartment through which the animals can enter via doors 4 and 5. Figures 4 and 5 appear to illustrate a feeding trough 17 which is movable from outside of to inside of the compartment 1. Inasmuch as this document is in the German language, a translation may be desired which, if requested, will be provided.

4. Dutch C.Octrooi No. 1002399, of Jan van Brug te Hoek van Holland and Arthur Oudshoorn te Schiedam, which was published October 1, 1997, appears to disclose a container which is supported on a framework by a bearing whereby the weight of the container and its contents tends to swing in the direction of the supporting framework and against a "weegsensor 6" which senses the weight of at least the contents of the container.

5. Dutch A Terinzagelegging, of Steven Hardeman te Amerongen, which was published March 16, 1994, and is for, it is surmised, a door or opening for a feeding container or trough for animals. Various embodiments disclose two slats or bars which can be moved near to each other or apart from each other whereby animals desiring accesses to the feeding container are either barred therefrom or permitted access thereto. This document like other documents above is in a language other than English whereby, if desired, a translation can be obtained and provided.

6. International Application No. PCT/SE95/00177, of Wendling et al, which was filed February 21, 1995, has an International Publication No. WO 95/23503, and an International Publication Date of September 8, 1995. The disclosure is for a feed weighing device which

comprises a framework for supporting a feed trough. The framework includes a recess 8 to receive the neck of an animal which feeds in the feeding trough 4. The support means 5 for the feed trough is connected to a rigid structure 2 which, in turn, is connected to the floor of a barn or stall. As seen in Figure 5B, the support means 5 is connected to the structure 2 at both the top and bottom by guide members 34a and 34b. These are shown in detail in Figure 5A. From Figure 5B it will be noted that support means 5 can move within limits relative to the rigid structure 2. The possible movement between structure 2 and weighing means 5 is indicated by the arrow "M" in Figures 5A and 5B. This movement is a function of the weight of the feed and is indicated by weight sensors 7a and 7b. The position of sensors 7a and 7b is shown in Figure 3 and the manner in which they operate is shown in Figure 5B. By having two weight sensors, it is alleged that an accurate weighing of the feed in the feed trough 4 is obtained. The recesses 8 can be closed by gates 43. These gates are controlled by information which identifies the specific animal desiring to enter recess 8. Attention in this International Patent Application is invited in particular to pages 1-3 which relate to the prior art of WO 86/01977, of April 10, 1986, and also the importance of the relation between the consumed amount of feed (of various amounts and kinds) to the yield of the milk wherein the increased yield in the last 100 years or so has been an order of magnitude.

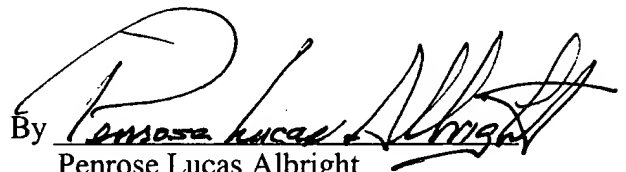
7. International Application No. PCT/NL95/00278, International Publication No. WO 96/05723, published February 29, 1996, of van der Lely, discloses a milking compartment for milking animals such as cows. In the forward part of the milking compartment, a hopper comprising a metering device 21 meters fodder to a feeding trough 15. The amount of fodder to be furnished to the animal is computer-determined based on the identity of the animal and the metering device spreads out the metering of the fodder so that it is dispensed to the animal

uniformly over the feeding period which, is at least approximately equal to the anticipated milking period for the animal involved. A measuring device comprising a piezoelectric element is mounted on a supporting beam 17 so that it receives the bottom of the feeding trough 15 and thus weighs the amount of fodder or water, or both, in the feeding trough 15 at any given time.

Inasmuch as this Information Disclosure Statement is being provided after the first Official Action in the instant Application, a fee of \$180.00 is being submitted herewith in conformity with 37 CFR §1.17(p). If this is incorrect, Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks is authorized to credit or debit our Account No. 13-2000 as appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

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